

Supervisor Pam Slater-Price

District 3 Slate

November 2007

Third District, County of San Diego



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Wildfire's Impacts Still Being Felt

The largest evacuation ever in San Diego County history due to the fire storm of October 2007 was successful because of preparations that began less than four years ago, following a previous tragic wildfire. More than 515,000 people were evacuated from the Witch Creek, Rice Canyon, Harris and Poomacha wildfire areas. Many received reverse 9-1-1 calls to their residences and businesses. These computer-generated calls, a system instituted by the county Board of Supervisors earlier this year, may have saved lives and minimized damage to structures because firefighters were able to concentrate their resources on fighting fires and protecting structures instead of assisting evacuations.

Residents can now receive emergency announcements on their cellphones by registering their number at www.alert-sandiego.org.

"These wildfires are tragic. Fortunately, the loss of life was minimal, due to the extraordinary efforts of our emergency responders," explained Supervisor Pam Slater-Price. "We also learned our lessons from four years ago, during the Cedar-Paradise wildfires. We had more resources, better organization and better strategic planning this time. We had the reverse 9-1-1 alert system. More than 130 action items have been implemented by this county since the Cedar-Paradise wildfires."

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Affected Homeowners Need Caution In Recovery Plans

The wildfires that roared through San Diego County this October destroyed more than 1,650 residences, businesses and commercial buildings while burning more than 368,000 acres. Estimates for structural damage exceed \$650 million, with an enormous financial impact reported in the unincorporated areas of the county.

"These are painful times. To watch as thousands of friends and colleagues evacuate, wondering if their homes will be there when they return, is a somber experience," said Supervisor Pam Slater-Price, who assisted people evacuated to the many shelters and made sure there were enough supplies on hand for them.

"It is human nature to want to immediately begin the recovery process. But I cannot stress enough that you need to be careful," said Supervisor Slater-Price. "Insurance claims should be filed before any debris is removed. Residents in the unincorporated areas of San Diego County need clearance from the Damage Assessment Team. To help facilitate recovery, the county set up a special website - www.sdcountryrecovery.com - that offers a wealth of information.

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News of Note

Health Coverage Expands

Healthcare coverage has been extended to about 3,000 low-income, uninsured, legal residents who are now eligible for federal funding.

Patients age 21 to 64 years of age with diabetes and/or hypertension will participate in the county's Health Care Coverage Initiative, a chronic disease management program that addresses the dependence on emergency room visits for primary care purposes or untreated conditions.



Using a comprehensive approach, the program targets low-income adults (up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level) who meet citizenship, residency and other eligibility criteria. Funding comes from the federal government, which will provide about \$44.9 million over the next three years.

Preventing Injurious Falls

Supervisor Pam Slater-Price is concerned that older adults are hospitalized for fall-related injuries five times more often than they are for injuries from any other cause.



To raise awareness of this growing trend, the county Aging & Independence Services received a \$25,000 grant to strengthen the Fall Prevention Task Force, which educates seniors and others about balance exercises, home safety measures and other ways to avoid falls.

For the past three years, task force members have been involved in safety fairs, hundreds of seminars, and produced an educational DVD, "Don't Fall For It." To participate in the task force, or to learn more about it, call (858) 495-5061.

Privacy Expert Appointed

David Nelson, who oversees the County of San Diego's information security, has been appointed to a 2-year term on the California Privacy and Security Advisory Board. The panel, composed of members from the public and private sectors, will identify and recommend security standards for the safe and effective exchange of health information.



HISTORICAL SUPPORT

Tom Cook, president of the Rancho Bernardo Historical Society, presents a certificate of recognition to Supervisor Pam Slater-Price, honoring her continued support of the non-profit civic group.

Slide Victims Eligible For Relief On Property Taxes

Homeowners whose properties were impacted by the Mount Soledad Road landslide remain eligible for property tax relief.

"My thoughts and prayers remain with all the families who were displaced, or in any way affected by this tragedy," said Supervisor Pam Slater-Price, whose Third District includes the community of La Jolla. "The county will offer all available resources to these homeowners."

Homeowners have up to 12 months after damage occurred to file a reassessment form. Owners who suffered damage in excess of \$10,000 should contact the Assessor's Office for the necessary claim form.

Upon receipt of the form, the Assessor's Office will determine if relief is available. The reduced tax evaluation will remain in effect until the property is rebuilt or repaired. If the owners repair or replace the house in a like or similar manner, they may retain their previous tax assessment and will not see an increase beyond what it was prior to the landslide.

Property tax bills have been mailed, and the first payment is due by Dec. 10.

The county's "Reassessment of Property Damaged by Misfortune or Calamity" form is available at www.sdarcc.com. For more information, contact the Assessor's Office directly at (858) 505-6262.

Winter Rec Programs To Debut

October's wildfires may have damaged some of San Diego County's recreational facilities but the vast majority are open.

In Escondido, Felicita Park (Clarence Lane and Felicita Road) has picnic areas, open fields, a wedding gazebo and reception tent. Group reservations can be made by calling (760) 745-4379.

Los Penasquitos Canyon remains a popular location, where tours are offered at 11

a.m. Saturdays and 1 p.m. Sundays. The preserve at 12020 Black Mountain Road north of Mira Mesa also features tours of the historic Ranch House. Call (858) 484-7504.

The San Elijo Ecological Reserve (2710 Manchester Ave, Cardiff) has docent-led lagoon hikes beginning at 9 a.m. on the second Saturday of each month.

In Solana Beach, San Dieguito Park, 1628 Lomas Santa Fe Drive, also has a network of trails, wedding gazebo and pavilions.

AROUND AND ABOUT IN THE THIRD DISTRICT



Supervisor Pam Slater-Price details the effort to add the Del Dios Highlands to the county parks system. She then joined park ranger Nick Sloan (top insert) to cut the ceremonial ribbon opening the preserve to the public. Supporters of the preserve (bottom insert) celebrate the opening.

Happier Days For Del Dios

Smiles and laughter filled the air during the Thursday, Oct. 18 dedication of the Del Dios Highlands County Preserve, a 350-acre nature corridor north of the Lake Hodges Dam. The occasion marked the debut of the 1 1/2 mile hiking trail that linked up with the 750-acre Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve. Sadly, less than two weeks later, the Del Dios Highlands Preserve suffered considerable damage during the Witch Creek wildfire.

During the fires, Supervisor Slater-Price and her staff moved quickly to make certain that shelters throughout her district – the Del Mar Fairgrounds, two in Mira Mesa, Pacific Beach, Encinitas and Escondido, among others – were fully equipped and staffed to meet the needs of the citizens evacuated to these sites. She arranged for food, cots, bedding, water, nurses county grief counselors, CERT teams, medical supplies and emergency services. The Supervisor joined Chairman Ron Roberts to announce a county cleanup program to protect citizens from harmful ash and debris and she will be working on environmental cleanup to protect watershed and parkland.

RECOVERY

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"These recommendations apply to all fire victims, even those who were fortunate enough to have only smoke or minor fire damage to their homes," said Supervisor Slater-Price.

"Make sure an insurance adjuster surveys your property before starting cleanup, including any damage to vehicles and landscaping. Then contact the county and have the Damage Assessment Team do its evaluation. This way, your rights are protected."

To launch the recovery effort, the county Board of Supervisors declared a state of emergency, a requirement to facilitate the waiver of building permit fees, deferral of property tax payments, and availability of funds to begin clearing debris from private property.

To expedite the extensive cleanup, the County of San Diego, in conjunction with other municipalities, state and federal governments, will hire contractors to begin removing debris for free. The county will then seek reimbursement of its share of costs through insurance claims.

Work has also begun to repair 200 miles of state highways damaged by the fires. Fence and guard rails are being replaced and signs reinstalled. Cost of repairs is estimated at \$20 million.



WILDFIRES

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Still, the damage was extensive. More than 1,650 homes and structures destroyed. Residential neighborhoods in Rancho Bernardo and south Escondido were hit especially hard.

"I toured these neighborhoods with federal and state governmental officials to make sure he understood the extent of the damage and the need to get residents back on the road to recovery as quick as possible," said Supervisor Slater-Price. "The governor pledged every asset the state has to help restore these communities."

Homeowners in the Third District can begin this process at the Local Assistance Center at the Rancho Bernardo Glassman Recreational Center, 18448 W. Bernardo Drive. The center is open weekdays from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sundays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The San Dieguito River Park was devastated. The circa 1880 Sikes Adobe farmhouse and the park headquarters in San Pasqual Valley were destroyed. The Witch Creek

VITAL NUMBERS

- Air quality information (858) 586-2707
- Ash & waste removal (888) 846-0800
- Consumer fraud (619) 531-3507
- Dead animal removal (619) 236-4250
- Erosion control (888) 846-0800
- Lost pets (619) 236-4250
- Property tax relief (858) 505-6262
- Rebuilding damage home (858) 694-3876
- Reclaim livestock (619) 236-4250
- Report damaged roads (877) 684-8000
- Water quality questions (858) 565-5173

blaze followed the park's boundaries from Lake Sutherland west to Rancho Santa Fe.

"We will recover, we will be stronger," said Supervisor Slater-Price. "The people of San Diego County are strong and proud."

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